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SENT DEPARTMENT 1491; REPEATED INFORMATION LONDON 332, PARIS 468

SEC'S PRESS COMMENTS TO EFFECT THAT FREE ELECTIONS NOT REPEAT NOT ONLY WAY TO REUNIFICATION HAVE CAUSED CONSTERNATION POLITICAL CIRCLES HERE.

RASNER, CDU WHIP, CALLED TO SAY SECRETARY'S REMARKS RECD WITH DISMAY AND CONCERN IN FACTION AND TO ASK WHAT CLARIFICATION EMBASSY COULD GIVE. SIMILAR CONCERN ALSO EXPRESSED IN CONVERSATION WITH CDU/CSU DEPUTIES BARZEL AND WACHER WHO HAD FIRST THOUGHT PRESS REPORTS INCORRECT BUT, ON CONFIRMATION, SAID VERY HEART OF QUESTION IS THAT THERE IS NO REPEAT NO ALTERNATIVE TO REUNIFICATION BY FREE ELECTIONS. BARZEL COMMENTED SOFTNESS WHICH RECENTLY FEARED IN FEDREP, NOW SEEMS TO BE ON US SIDE. CDU AND GOVT PRESS OFFICES ARE TAKING LINE THAT THEY ARE UNDISTURBED, THAT US POSITION REMAINS SOLID, FED GOVT HAD ALWAYS SAID FREE ELECTIONS ARE WAY TO REUNIFICATION AND SEC HAD NOT REPEAT NOT PROPOSED OTHER APPROACH. HOWEVER, CDU IS MUCH CONCERNED AND ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE ON FREE ELECTIONS POINT SINCE IN FACTION MEETINGS THIS WEEK CHANCELLOR HAS MARSHALLED HIS PARTY BEHIND POSITION THAT PEACE TREATY ONLY POSSIBLE WITH GERMANY REUNIFIED BY FREE ELECTIONS. SPD PRESS IS HAILING STATEMENT AS POSSIBLE TURNING POINT IN US POLICY.

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